

RETAIL PRICES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1953.

All Items - "C" Series.

"C" Series index numbers of retail prices of all items for the September quarter of 1953 (with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1,000) were as shown below.

"C" Series Retail Price Index Numbers and Percentage Increases, September Quarter, 1953.

City.	Index Number.	Increase from Year Ended June, 1939.	Increase from Sept. Quarter, 1952.	Increase from June Quarter, 1953.
		%	%	%
Brisbane ..	2,143	148.3	2.3	1.3
Toowoomba ..	2,172	155.2	3.1	1.1
Rockhampton	2,177	152.8	3.1	1.4
Townsville	2,251	146.8	3.5	1.0
Bundaberg ..	2,121	152.2	2.1	0.6
Warwick ..	2,147	161.2	2.5	0.8

The "C" Series retail prices index number for Queensland (weighted average of "five towns") increased from 2,127 in the June quarter to 2,154 in the September quarter of 1953. The rise, which was equivalent to 1.3 per cent., although much smaller than those experienced during the rapid inflation of 1951, was the largest since the September quarter of 1952. Increases in the six different towns for which data are available varied from 0.6 per cent. in Bundaberg to 1.4 per cent. in Rockhampton. The Brisbane increase was 1.3 per cent.

The major factor in the quarter's increase was food and grocery prices, in which an increase in potato prices was outstanding. Food and grocery prices rose by over 2 per cent. in five towns and by 1.6 per cent. in the other which was Townsville. Clothing and footwear prices were relatively stable for the third successive quarter, three towns recording small decreases. Two towns showed slight increases in these items, while the only significant increase was a rise of 1.0 per cent. in Townsville. In miscellaneous items, Townsville, Bundaberg, and Warwick recorded insignificant rises, Brisbane and Toowoomba each a rise of 0.7 per cent., and Rockhampton the only large rise - 1.7 per cent. House rents moved upwards by over 1 per cent. in Brisbane, Toowoomba, and Rockhampton, but were fairly steady in the other three towns.

The total increase in the "C" Series index number for Brisbane over the period of twelve months ended September, 1953, was 2.3 per cent., compared with 16.6 per cent. over the corresponding period twelve months earlier. The index for the recent quarter was 148.3 per cent. higher than the average for 1938-39, indicating that £2 9s. 8d. is now required to buy goods and services which would have cost £1 before the war.

Percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39 in food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and miscellaneous items are shown in the following table.

Retail Prices. Percentage Increases<sup>a</sup>, September Quarter, 1953.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1953.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1953.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1953.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane ..	183.8	2.4	275.9	0.4	102.1	0.7
Toowoomba ..	204.8	2.3	276.7	-0.3	101.1	0.7
Rockhampton	178.7	2.1	268.4	0.4	111.6	1.7
Townsville	173.2	1.6	276.2	1.0	103.9	0.2
Bundaberg ..	176.6	2.1	272.0	-1.0	98.6	0.1
Warwick ..	195.2	2.2	275.5	-0.5	105.5	0.3

<sup>a</sup> Minus (-) indicates decrease.

Food and Groceries.

The increases recorded in the food and grocery index numbers for September quarter were chiefly due to increases in the prices of potatoes, tea, bacon, and some cuts of meat. The increases were partly offset by small decreases in the prices of onions and eggs.

Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The rent index remained stationary during the quarter in Bundaberg and Warwick but increased in Brisbane, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, and Townsville by 1.2 per cent., 1.0 per cent., 1.5 per cent., and 0.5 per cent. respectively.

Clothing and Footwear.

Variations in the clothing and footwear index numbers ranged from a decrease of 1.0 per cent. in Bundaberg to an increase of 1.0 per cent. in Townsville. Men's and boys' suits increased in price while shirts decreased. Prices of women's footwear also decreased slightly in some towns.

Miscellaneous Items.

The chief causes of the increases recorded in the miscellaneous items index were higher railway fares and, in Brisbane, Toowoomba, and Rockhampton, higher charges for gas.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in September quarter, 1953, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	5 $\frac{1}{4}$		19	10 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	6 $\frac{3}{4}$
Rockhampton	1	0	3 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	6 $\frac{1}{2}$		19	0		19	11 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	1	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Townsville ..	1	1	0	1	1	5 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	4 $\frac{1}{4}$	1	0	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	8
Bundaberg ..		19	9 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	6 $\frac{3}{4}$		15	0 $\frac{3}{4}$	1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
Warwick ..	1	0	0 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	0	6 $\frac{3}{4}$		16	3 $\frac{3}{4}$		19	10 $\frac{1}{2}$	1	1	5

In relation to Brisbane, the prices of all items together decreased in all except one of the five provincial cities for which the index numbers are calculated. The largest variation in these relative prices occurred in Bundaberg, where the amount required to purchase goods costing £1 in Brisbane fell from 19s. 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ d. during June quarter to 19s. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. during September quarter. Decreases of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d.,  $\frac{3}{4}$ d., and  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £ occurred in Toowoomba, Townsville, and Warwick respectively, while a small increase occurred in Rockhampton ( $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the £).

The prices of food and groceries in each of the five provincial cities for which data are collected are higher than in Brisbane, but during the recent quarter these prices came slightly closer to Brisbane prices in all cities. In Townsville, which is the dearest of these cities, the cost of purchasing food and groceries costing £1 in Brisbane decreased during the quarter from £1 1s. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. to £1 1s. 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. Before the war both Toowoomba and Warwick had cheaper food than Brisbane, but now in these places, as in the other three cities, food is dearer than in Brisbane.

Clothing and footwear prices were higher than in Brisbane in Toowoomba, Townsville, and Bundaberg, and lower in Rockhampton and Warwick. Townsville was the only one of the five provincial cities where the prices of clothing and footwear increased during the quarter in relation to Brisbane prices. The prices of these items in Warwick were lower than in any of the other Queensland cities for which the index number is calculated.



Prices for miscellaneous items were higher in each of the five provincial cities than in Brisbane, those closest to the metropolitan being in Bundaberg, where the excess over Brisbane prices was  $5\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the £. Of the cities covered by the survey, Townsville had the highest prices for miscellaneous items. In that city the excess over Brisbane prices decreased from 1s.  $9\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1s. 8d. in the £. The largest change in the relativity in the latest quarter was a rise of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £ in the Rockhampton excess over Brisbane.

#### Commonwealth and State Basic Wage Rates.

On 12th September the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration decided that in the case of certain awards the automatic ("cost of living") adjustments should no longer operate. In a series of subsequent applications to the Court, the majority of awards have been varied in a similar manner. The basic wages which continue to operate under these varied awards are shown in the first column of wage rates below. The Registrar of the Court, however, on 21st October, 1953, published the usual tables of Court Index Numbers (Third Series), and the figures below in the second column of wage rates have been taken from these tables. They show the basic wage rates which would have operated in unvaried awards following the publication of the September quarter, 1953, index numbers.

The Queensland State Industrial Court on 16th October, 1953, decided that its basic wage for males would be increased by 3s. and that for females by 2s. from 2nd November, 1953.

#### Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates.

##### Australian Capital Cities.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series), 3rd Quarter, 1953.	Commonwealth Basic Wage for Males. <sup>a</sup>			State Basic Wage.				
		Under Varied Awards.	Under Automatic Scale.		Males.	Females.	Date of Operation.		
			Amount.	Increase.					
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.			
Brisbane	2,143	10 18 0	11 1 0	3 0	11 2 0	7 9 0	2. 11. 53		
Sydney	2,338	12 3 0	12 6 0	3 0	12 3 0	9 2 0	1. 8. 53		
Melbourne	2,301	11 15 0	11 17 0	2 0	b	b	-		
Adelaide	2,264	11 11 0	11 13 0	2 0	11 11 0	8 13 0	1. 8. 53		
Perth	2,328	11 16 0	12 0 0	4 0	12 6 6	8 0 3	28. 7. 53		
Hobart	2,444	12 2 0	12 12 0	10 0	b	b	-		

<sup>a</sup> The female rates are 75 per cent. of the male rates.

<sup>b</sup> No State wage declared. The rate fixed by the Commonwealth Court has usually been followed to a large extent.

S.E. SOLOMON,  
GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

BRISBANE.

18th November, 1953.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.  
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1953.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.	March, 1953.	June, 1953.	Sept., 1953.
Brisbane .. ..	863	1,079	2,113	2,094	2,089	2,105	2,115	2,143
Toowoomba .. ..	851	1,092	2,139	2,107	2,110	2,126	2,149	2,172
Rockhampton .. ..	861	1,084	2,148	2,112	2,128	2,139	2,146	2,177
Townsville .. ..	912	1,119	2,222	2,175	2,194	2,215	2,228	2,251
Bundaberg .. ..	841	1,059	2,105	2,078	2,086	2,104	2,109	2,121
Weighted Average								
Five Towns .. ..	864	1,082	2,124	2,101	2,100	2,116	2,127	2,154
Warwick .. ..	822	1,073	2,123	2,094	2,102	2,114	2,130	2,147

Table No. 2 - Food and Groceries Retail Prices Index.  
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1953.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.	March, 1953.	June, 1953.	Sept., 1953.
Brisbane .. ..	856	971	2,371	2,367	2,321	2,361	2,372	2,429
Toowoomba .. ..	814	1,010	2,416	2,401	2,361	2,396	2,426	2,481
Rockhampton .. ..	895	1,012	2,435	2,409	2,383	2,419	2,443	2,494
Townsville .. ..	955	1,057	2,559	2,531	2,506	2,553	2,568	2,609
Bundaberg .. ..	903	1,027	2,439	2,398	2,382	2,430	2,446	2,498
Weighted Average								
Five Towns .. ..	864	984	2,393	2,384	2,342	2,382	2,396	2,452
Warwick .. ..	846	1,000	2,440	2,412	2,394	2,423	2,444	2,497

Table No. 3 - Clothing and Footwear Retail Prices Index.  
(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1,000.)

City.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1946.	Year Ended Sept., 1953.	Quarter Ended -				
				Sept., 1952.	Dec., 1952.	March, 1953.	June, 1953.	Sept., 1953.
Brisbane .. ..	829	1,454	3,098	3,049	3,088	3,083	3,104	3,116
Toowoomba .. ..	829	1,429	3,108	3,020	3,086	3,091	3,133	3,123
Rockhampton .. ..	845	1,477	3,114	3,070	3,128	3,114	3,100	3,115
Townsville .. ..	840	1,457	3,119	3,045	3,097	3,090	3,130	3,160
Bundaberg .. ..	839	1,447	3,144	3,102	3,152	3,149	3,154	3,121
Weighted Average								
Five Towns .. ..	831	1,454	3,102	3,050	3,093	3,088	3,109	3,119
Warwick .. ..	825	1,441	3,102	3,044	3,096	3,101	3,113	3,098